

**Minimizing the number of data
for evaluating completion rates
in educational programmes**

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IMHE Paris, September 8-10 2008



Central question

- We like evidence based policy development
but
- We don't like /don't accept the evidence

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Aim

Bridging the gap between
institutional researchers and
the institutional leadership

A practitioner's view

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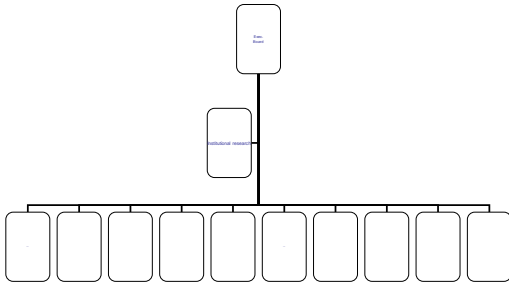
Departments

- Theology
- Philosophy
- Arts
- Law
- Economics & Business Administration
- Sciences
- Earth & Life Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Psychology & Education
- Human Movement sciences
- Medicine (VUMC)
- Dentistry (ACTA)

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Organisational Structure



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P&C Cyclus

Executive Board and Deans of Faculty

- Spring meetings: past performance
- Autumn meetings: planning and budgeting

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Why the debate failed?

- Lack of reliability of the data
- Lack of confidence in the data
- Dispute about the relevance of the data
- Data are inaccessible (too many, too detailed, too complex, bad presentation) and therefore neglected
- Fuzziness about goals to hide disagreement (hiding behind the data problem)

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Classical solution

More data!

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Our solution

Minimize data

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Rule 1

Take (a lot of) time to agree on purposes

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Example: Completion rates

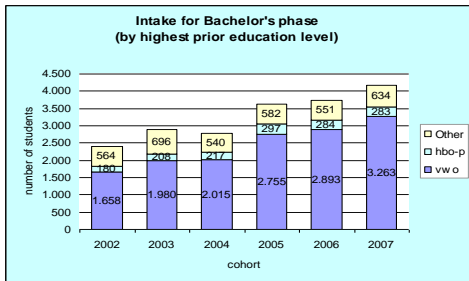
- How is success defined?
- How is "completion" defined?
- How do we count students switching to other university programmes?
- Agreement on standards for time to degree
- Etc.

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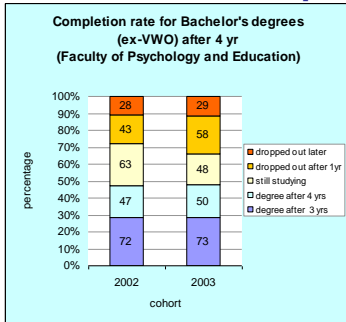
Rule 2

Use proxy data that are not complete but sufficiently indicative



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Rule 3: Use 2-seconds pictures



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Rule 4: Structured debate

Questions:

- 1 Accept "What if" questions?
- 2 Do the results satisfy you?
- 3 Is it possible to improve performance?

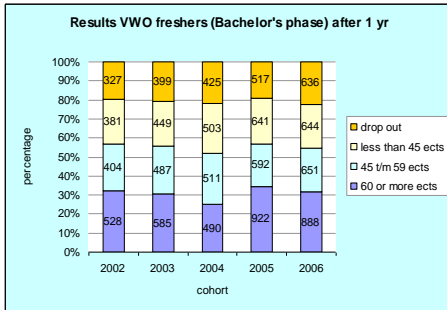
If 2 = no and 3 = yes then:

- 4 Which measures are to be taken?

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example



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Conclusions

Our approach has brought:

- Efficiency in the data gathering, by
- Focussing on essential matters

And:

- Rigor in the performance debate, by
- debating realistic goals, and
- Focussing on change

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